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*The Well-Spring of Life opened in Christ : Or, An
Invitation to thirsty Souls, to come and to take the
Water of Life freely.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached on

F E B R U A R Y 24, 1768,

T O A

S O C I E T Y of the CHILDREN of GOD at
Hampstead, near L O N D O N,

On R E V. XXII. 17.

To which is prefixed,

A CERTIFICATE of the AUTHOR's Call to the Work of the
MINISTRY, from the Church to which he did belong.

By J O H N L L O Y D.

Published by Request.

Ho; every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money,
come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and
without price, ISA. lv. 1.

L O N D O N :

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p.

The Well-Spring of Life opened in Christ : Or, An
Invitation to the World, to turn and to receive the
Water of Life freely.

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
FEBRUARY 14, 1768.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF GOD AT
LONDON.



To which is prefixed,
A CERTIFICATE of the Author's Call to the Work of the
Ministry, from the Church to which he belonged.

BY JOHN LLOYD.

LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall.

1768.

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To my dear and worthy PASTOR the Reverend
Dr. GIFFORD.

Honoured and Reverend Sir,

“ P E R M I T me with submission to make my
“ most grateful acknowledgments to you, as
“ being the instrument, under God, of bringing to
“ unworthy a creature forth to public usefulness to
“ the dear children of God. It was the same God
“ who I trust called me to the work, that put it
“ into your heart to encourage me in it; and I
“ doubt not but that he will carry me through it:
“ To him be all the glory. I can call my being
“ brought forth to this work, by your instrumentali-
“ ty, no other than a resurrection; for indeed I
“ prophesied before in sackcloth, under every dis-
“ couragement. But now, through grace, I am
“ enabled to see that the word is blessed to the
“ souls of many of the dear children of God. O
“ that I may be kept humble and thankful, as you
“ have already warned me! I hope you will bear me
“ on your heart before the throne of grace, while
“ I am,

Honoured and Reverend Sir,

Your obedient, dutiful Servant,

In the bonds of the gospel,

June 18,

1768.

J O H N L L O Y D.”

ADVERTISEMENT to the READER.

WAS I to give the world an account of the dealings of the Lord with me, in bringing of me forth to this great work, it might fill an ample volume. May it suffice if, according to the desire of my friends, I give you the following, which is a Certificate of the Church to which I did belong.

“ To whomsoever this may concern.

“ THIS is to certify, That we, a church of Christ, meeting in Little Ayliffe-Street, Goodman's-Fields, London, the Rev. Mr. Dowers, pastor of the said church, who baptized our brother, John Lloyd, upon his profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and was received into full communion with us in the year 1764. But for some time he has experienced a gift of God bestowed upon him; he therefore requested his gift to be tried by the church, that so he might be sent forth in a regular gospel-way. The church therefore agreed upon it, and tried his gift for six months, that we might be the better capable of forming a judgment of his talent, and whether he was a qualified person. Having maturely weighed these things, we on April 20, 1767; we, the church, did give him a proper call to the ministry. And, as this is the case, we humbly cast him upon the Lord's good providence, and heartily wish the Lord may open a door for him to be useful to the souls of many. As to his moral character, it is undeniable and blameless. We therefore, in the name of the church, wish him God speed in the name of the Lord. And to the truth hereof we have set our hands.

JOHN WARD, Deacon.

SAMUEL LASEY, Deacon.

JOHN MATTHEWS.

SAMUEL EAGLE.

*The Well-Spring of Life opened in Christ: Or, an
Invitation to thirsty Souls, to come and to take the
Water of Life freely.*

R E V. xxii. 17.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

THIS book, called the revelation of St. John, or the revelation of Christ, which was shewn to John in the Isle of Patmos, appears to many of God's people to be dark and obscure in many parts of it; and it requires more wisdom than we can acquire by any art or skill of our own, to understand its meaning.

"The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, he only hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof," chap. v. 5. So that when a learned man, that is destitute of the grace of God, hath this book or any other part of sacred writ put into his hands, that he might read the same; the scriptures inform us he saith, "I cannot, for it is sealed." Isa. xxix. 11. It is the same Spirit of God

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that:

that indited the word, that only can open and explain the spiritual meaning thereof to his people.

It is very remarkable that this beloved disciple should have such a glorious revelation of such things, as should shortly come to pass, even when he was in the greatest obscurity. He was banished (as we are informed) into the isle of Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ; deprived of the privileges of worshipping God amongst his saints, of preaching his word and attending upon his ordinances, yet he was not forgetful of the Lord's-day; and a blessed sabbath it was no doubt to his soul; for we are informed that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day, chap. i. 10. And I think we have reason to believe he had this book of the Revelation revealed to him upon that day.

It is not my design to take any particular notice of those deep mysteries contained in this book, but as they stand related to our text. We have, chap. xxi. a description given us of the New-Jerusalem church-state, or personal reign of our Lord Jesus Christ; of the new heaven and the new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And John tells us that he "saw the holy city, New-Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," verse 1, 2.

We have in this chapter a full description given us of this city; of its walls, its gates, its foundations, the precious and beautiful stones by which it is said to be garnished and adorned with; with the exact dimensions of it, its being of pure gold like unto clear glass; its brightness, so that it need not the light of the sun or the moon to shine in it, Christ the Lamb being the light thereof; with its inhabitants, the nations of them that are saved are to walk in the light of it. And lastly, we are informed
who

who are to be excluded this city : any that defileth or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; and that none are to enter into it, but such whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The chapter, out of which I have taken my text, proceeds to give an account of this city. First, of that pure river of water of life clear as crystal, which proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb, verse 1. Secondly, of the tree of life, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is from him all our fruit is found. His situation (under this metaphor) in the midst of the street; and on either side the river of life.

The continued variety of fruit from him as such : Twelve manner of fruits yielded every month. The healing virtue of this tree, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, verse 2. There can be no curse to the glorious inhabitants of this city, because the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. And they shall serve him with unspeakable delight and pleasure, verse 3. Yea they shall have a full view of Christ, they shall see his face, not through a glass darkly as they do now, but face to face, know as they are known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And his name shall be in their foreheads, plain to be seen; neither will they be ashamed of their Lord and Master in this glorious state, verse 4.

Thirdly, we have a description given us, verse 5. of the light of this city. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord giveth them light : Christ himself is the light of this city, chap. xxi. 23. in comparison of which the sun itself in its meridian is but darkness. Yea, there shall be such a glory on the bodies of the saints, in the morning of the resurrection; (for this glorious church-state will follow upon the first resurrection, as it is called, chap. xx. 5)

as that they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. Their bodies will be like Christ's glorious body, that is, there will be no sort of darkness or any other infirmity in them, to hinder their bliss and glory, and they shall reign with Christ for ever and ever. Blessed state indeed !

The angel then proceeds to inform John of the truth of these things, and that they should soon be accomplished ; that the coming of Christ was near, even at that time of day, " Behold I come quickly ;" and shews the blessedness of such who observe these things, that keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book, verse 6, 7. And the apostle John informs us, that he saw these things and heard them ; and so great was his reverence and esteem for the angel that shewed him these things, that he was about to pay him worship and divine adoration ; but the angel forbid him, by informing him he was but a creature, a fellow-servant of God with himself, and informs him whom he should worship, namely God ; " worship God," verse 8, 9. and orders him not to seal the sayings of the prophecies of this book, on account of its speedy accomplishment, " for the time is at hand," verse 10. " He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still." Awful words ! Let the wicked remain in their carnal unregenerate state to perish for ever ; let them ever continue filthy, let there be no change in them ; the time is at hand, let no more gospel-sermons be preached to them ; let them remain under the indignation of the Almighty for ever. So let him that is righteous in the righteousness of Christ ever remain so. And he that is holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15. let him remain so, verse 11. " Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," verse 12. I am come with a reward of grace, to
reward

reward all those who have made it manifest that they love me, by keeping my commandments; their good works have declared them to be no hypocrites, but the real children of God. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," ver. 13. There is none besides me; so that my word is to be taken for every thing which I have promised as to the salvation of my people, and the destruction of my enemies. "Blessed therefore are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life; and may enter in through the gates into the city," ver. 14.

None have a right to live in this city, but such who are holy in all manner of conversation. For though our right and title to this city comes to us through the righteousness of Christ, yet if there is not a meetness wrought in our heart by the grace and Spirit of God, we make it appear we have no right to the tree of life, or to enter in at the gates of this city. "For without are dogs," men in a state of nature, however they may speak of this city, yet they are but dogs who bite and tear the sheep of Christ. But now they will not be suffered to come into the city; they shall be without with their own company, such as forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, verse 15.

Now these things are to be declared and testified in the churches of Christ amongst his assemblies. Christ has sent his angel to this intent and purpose, to testify these things to John, that they might be made known to his churches. So his ministers, who are compared to angels, chap. i. 20. are to testify that Christ will come quickly, to accomplish all that he has promised in this book. And if we would know more of this glorious personage the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to accomplish all things that

that are written in this book concerning him, he is the root and offspring of David; David's root, as all his and our fruit is from him; David's Offspring according to the flesh, by lineal descent, the son of David; David's son, and David's Lord. He is likewise called the bright and morning-star, ver. 16. or day-star which ariseth in the hearts of his people, 2 Pet. i. 19. whereby they discover the first dawns of grace upon their hearts; and who is willing to give this water of life to every poor thirsty soul who finds his need of it.

And then follow the words of our text: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." And the Spirit and the bride; which shews that the Spirit of God, who works and operates upon the hearts of God's people, as much desires their salvation as Christ who wrought it out for them. So does the bride the Lamb's wife desire the salvation of all God's elect, every poor thirsty soul that thirsts for the water of life: So do those who give their attendance upon the gospel and know it: "Him that heareth faith, Come." They express their desire that others might taste this water with themselves. "And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

In discoursing on these words, I shall,

First, Shew what is here held forth by the water of life.

Secondly, Shew who are the persons that are invited to this water, namely, such who are athirst, and such who are willing to receive it.

Thirdly, Take some notice of the invitation itself.

Fourthly and lastly, Make some improvement of the whole.

First,

First, We are to shew what is here held forth by the water of life. The word *waters* hath various significations in the word of God, as first, It signifies great affliction, Psalm lxix. 1. "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul." "My soul is overwhelmed with distress and trouble, that I know not what to do;" the soul then cries for deliverance out of the mire of sin and corruption; "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink, let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," ver. 14, 15.

Depths of affliction expressed by a water flood; which seems to carry away the soul in an instant. When the enemy thus comes in like a flood, Isai. lix. 19. The soul cries unto the Lord, that he might not sink, that his head might be preserved above water; so that he might not be drowned, entirely drowned, by these afflictions; when called to go through these waters. Isa. xliii. 2. The conduct of proud and insolent men toward the godly, are likewise represented in the scripture, as proud waters overwhelming the souls of God's people, Psalm cxxiv. 5.

But these are very different from the water in our Text. The water in our text, as it is called the water of life, is expressive, 1. Of the immense ocean of God's everlasting love to his people in Christ. This is a river without a bank or shore: Waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over, Ezek. xlvii. 5. O the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of this river; it is unmeasurable; it is full of water, Psalm lxxv. 9. an inexhaustible fulness, that never can be spent; a sea that never can be dried up; a sea of grace, and abundance of grace as it flows from the loving heart of Christ to his church and people

people in all ages, and to all sorts of persons in all sorts of circumstances, in all distresses, under all persecutions, through all temptations, and afflictions they may be exposed unto. Those who know most of this boundless ocean, know but little of it. We may apprehend something of it, but can never comprehend it.

2. If we consider the saving influence this water of life hath upon the hearts of such who receive it, it will appear to be precious water indeed. 1. As it imparts life to the happy subjects of it. Hence we find in our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria in the ivth chapter of St. John's gospel. After he had asked her to drink, of the water of the well she was then drawing at, she replies; "how is it, that thou being a Jew askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria," &c. Our Lord informs her, "if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee the living water:" which raised the poor woman's attention, and caused a desire in her soul to know something of this water; therefore she enquires ver. 11. Whence he had it? Our Lord informs her how different this water was from that she was then drawing; "whosoever shall drink of this water, shall thirst again: But whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And again, John vii. 38. "He that believeth in me, as the scripture hath said; out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water:" which is spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive, ver. 39. The Spirit shall be poured in abundance as waters upon their souls: So that there shall be an

an overflowing of grace upon the hearts of God's elect. It shall be ever springing up in their souls. For as all their springs are in Christ, Psalm lxxxvii. 7. the ocean and fountain of all; so these springs come from him continually, and are ever flowing into their souls, to quicken, enliven, and animate them from time to time, springing up into life everlasting. Again, the saving influence this water of life hath upon the hearts of such who receive it, will make it appear to be still more precious, if we consider, 2dly. That this water of life is very refreshing water to poor thirsty panting souls. "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst: I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies: I will make the wilderness pools of water, and the dry land springs of water," Isa. xli. 17, 18.

O how desirable, think you, is water to a thirsty soul, whose conscience has been scorched with the flames of mount Sinai! How cooling these waters when administered to the poor, needy, and distressed soul that pants for Christ, nothing else will refresh him. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm xlii. 1, 2. "They long to drink with Christ of the brook in the way, that they might be refreshed and lift up their heads," Psalm cx. 7. Such know them to be refreshing waters who have drank freely of them. Their souls in times past have been so faint, that they have had no strength in them; after that they "had forsaken the fountain of living water, and hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that

that will hold no water, Jer. ii. 13. Alas! These will not satisfy or refresh their souls; they are of no service to them till they return to the fountain they formerly drank of. Then O how refreshing! O how cheering to their souls are these waters! This is a dry and barren wilderness, therefore springs, fountains and rivers of water must be very desirable to those who are travelling through it. The Lord Jesus Christ, under the character of a shepherd, "leads his sheep through this wilderness beside the still waters," Psalm xxiii. 2. where he "causes them to lie down in green pastures:" (such is his care of them) so that they are refreshed in their souls while his comforts and consolations abound towards them; their souls are as a watered garden, as a field which the Lord hath blessed. "They grow as the lily, and cast forth their roots as Lebanon; their branches shall spread, and their beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and their smell as Lebanon. They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon," Hosea xiv. 5, 6, 7.

O how fruitful are their souls when the grace of God descends as "rain upon the mown grass!" Psalm lxxii. 6. How do they then "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" 2 Pet. iii. 18. So refreshing is this water of life to replenish the souls of all who receive it. But O what a glorious time will that be! when we shall be led to fountains of waters; when we shall be taken to the fountain-head, to take our eternal fill of this water of life: our tongue shall not fail for thirst any more for ever, for we shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon us, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed

feed us, and shall lead us to living fountains of water : and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes," Rev. vii. 16, 17.

Thirdly, These waters are precious, as they sanctify and cleanse our nature. " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. It is necessary that we should be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, before we can perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Now this water of life is of a purifying nature ; it not only imparts life (as it is the water of life) and is refreshing ; but it is sanctifying. " Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Man by nature is unclean, therefore he needs cleansing. " Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," Psalm li. 2. He is altogether corrupt in every power and faculty of his soul. His inward parts are very wickedness. His heart is a cage of unclean birds, a hold of every foul spirit, and habitation of devils, a babel of mixture and confusion, Rev. xviii. 2. Now by receiving this water of life, as it is freely given to us in the gospel, it works so upon the heart and conscience as to make a visible change in the soul ; it purifies the heart and regulates the affections and dispositions of men, causes the drunkard to become sober, the whoremonger and unclean person to become chaste, the covetous man to become liberal, the carnal worldly-minded man to become heavenly and spiritual ; yea the stinking Pharisee (that nasty, filthy, stinking seemingly pious devil, the worst of all devils that stinks so in the nostrils of the Almighty) will now be content to renounce all his own righteousnesses as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6. And make him not only cry out against sin as he did before, but he

will hate it on account of the malignity he now sees to be in it. His desire now will be holy; he will delight in the law of God after the inward man, tho' he should find another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, Rom. vii. 22, 23. which makes sin to be his greatest burden, and causes him to cry with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ver. 24. Christ shall deliver. I thank God, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. There is the deliverance; there being a fountain opened in Christ to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1. A fountain of a Redeemer's blood to justify them before God. A fountain as it flows in with a sense of pardon and acceptance with God upon their souls. A fountain of grace to sanctify their nature; a fountain for sin and uncleanness to wash their guilty souls in, and to which they are to have recourse at all times and seasons, when they contract fresh guilt, or should have any fresh discovery of the naughtiness of their hearts. That they might be preserved from despair, they are to have recourse to this fountain. And well would it be for God's children, were they to look more to this fountain than at their own uncleanness. Christ knew we need cleansing, and made provision as such. The fountain is opened, opened wide to every poor, sinful, polluted, as well as thirsty, panting soul, that is led by the Spirit of God to see his need of it. Here they may wash and be clean, be sanctified wholly. So that their whole spirit, soul and body, shall be preserved blameless to the coming of Christ, 1 Thess. v. 23. There is a necessity to make fresh and continued application to the throne of grace for a continual flow of this water of life into our souls. The more we receive of this water, the more our souls will

will grow and flourish in the divine life; and the more we shall be kept from the pollutions and corruptions that are in the world through lust. The leprous soul is cured of his leprosy; the soul that is cast into the open field, to the lothing of his person, in his sin and in his blood, is here washed, thoroughly washed, Ezek. xvi. 9. All which makes this water of life precious to all those who know any thing of it.

But I would farther observe, that this water of life springs and flows only into the church of Christ. Hence the church itself is called a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, Cant. iv. 12. It is not common water, neither does it flow every where, neither is it to be profaned by any unhallowed mouth: no ungodly impenitent person as such, hath any right to this water of life. It is a spring, a well-spring of life: But alas! it is shut up. It is a fountain; a fountain of a Redeemer's blood! A fountain of grace, but alas! to them it is sealed. The final impenitent and unbelieving sinner is eternally excluded this water of life. Dives cries in hell for one drop of water to cool his parched tongue, but is denied; much less must he expect this water of life. No Pharisee living and dying such, has any right to this water of life; he scorns to come to this water of life; while he thinks he can do something to obtain life by the works of his own hands. He will do all that lies in his power to muddy this river of water of life, though it is spoke of by the Holy Ghost to be clear as crystal; as it comes from the throne of God and the Lamb, it has not the least taint in it, or any tincture of the creature mixt with it. It is all free distinguishing discriminating grace, as it comes from God and flows to the soul of a believer; and none but those who receive it as such, can have any part in this water of life mentioned in our text.

Which brings me, Secondly,

Secondly, To shew who are the persons that are invited to this water of life; namely, such who thirst after it, and such who are willing to receive it. "And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

1st. Those who thirst after this water of life.

Now every man in the world thirsts after happiness of one sort or other; some place it in honour, some in pleasure, some in worldly profit: But happiness is the thing they are in quest of, they thirst after it but cannot attain to it. "The depth saith it is not in me; and the sea saith it is not with me," Job xxviii. 14. No, these are things too low fully to satisfy an immortal soul; nothing short of him that made the soul can satisfy its vast desires. And yet such is the depravity of corrupt nature, that we naturally pursue every thing that is foolish, light and vain, before the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither is it all the terrors of the law, the flashes of mount Sinai, that will make a soul thirst after Christ. It is not a fearful and dreadful apprehension of the Almighty as a sin-avenging God, that will cause us to thirst after him; neither will a view of the deplorable state and condition we are in by nature, without a sight of that great salvation Christ has wrought out for poor sinners as held forth in the gospel, cause us to thirst after him. In short, nothing can cause us to thirst after Christ, without some knowledge of and acquaintance with him: we cannot thirst after a thing we have no sort of likeness or relish unto; neither can we relish what we know nothing at all about. This holy thirst after the water of life must be created in the soul, before the soul will desire to know any thing of Christ; so must the creature be entirely passive as to any thing he can do towards giving himself this thirst after Christ, or the water of

of life as it is expressed in the text. The soul being thus wrought upon by the Spirit of God, perceives a suitableness in him which causes him to thirst after him; he longs for more acquaintance with him, for a larger intercourse to be opened for more freedom and familiarity, for greater access to the throne of his grace. Thus he delights to converse with God, and thirsts after more and more of it.

Now the words suppose an invitation to such; that is, Let him come and take his fill of this water; he is kindly welcome to it, it is provided for him, and it is freely given him. "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye: buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," Isa. lv. i.

2dly, Those who are willing to receive this water of life are welcome to it; "whoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely." But here we are not to conceive as though man had a power or will of his own, to turn to God; No, by no means: our will is always free to sin, entirely disposed to sin against God, it chooses and approves of every thing that is contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God; and has a fixed aversion to every thing that is of God. "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can it be," Rom. viii. 7.

Now can it be supposed that the mind which is at enmity against God, can be disposed to choose his way of salvation? No: Man had rather be damned than to submit his rebellious will to the will of God; till the Lord Jesus Christ by an irresistible power conquers his will, and brings it into subjection to his own. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Psalm cx. 3. What! should they be rebellious?

rebellious? Then Christ will conquer them by his grace, discover his love to them through all their rebellion, ingratitude and unbelief, and shall shame them out of it. Have they a heart of stone against God? Well, "the Lord will take this away, and give them a heart of flesh," Ezek. xi. 19. Yea, he will put his "law in their minds, and write it in their hearts: and he will be their God, and they shall be his people," Heb. viii. 10. If the Lord JEHOVAH says, I will, and they shall; it matters not what men or devils say, to contradict it. Christ will have the last word; our corruptions cannot be stronger than Christ. He can make the most stubborn and obstinate sinner comply with his method of salvation; yea, make him in love with it. It is the Lord Jesus Christ that must make us willing to come, before we can come to him; and all such who are thus made, willing are heartily welcome: "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Which brings me,

Thirdly, To take notice of the invitation itself, "The Spirit says, Come." Coming and believing in scripture are synonymous terms, one and the same thing, as appears, John vi. 35, &c. "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that *cometh* to me shall never hunger; and he that *believeth* on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Nor can any thus come, or believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; but such who are drawn by the Father. "No man can come to me, except the Father who sent me draw him," ver. 44. Ministers may spend their strength, but in vain, unless God by his Spirit will apply

apply the word to the consciences of those who hear it. "In vain does Paul plant or Apollos water, if God does not give the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 6. They may preach to the auditory; but cannot give them ears to hear the word: "He that hath an ear let him hear, what the Spirit saith to the churches," Rev. ii. 29. which supposes some have no spiritual ears to hear, and only such who have this ear can hear.

Now when the Spirit says, Come: He draws them to himself. He does not propose eternal life to them in case they are disposed to accept of it, and so leave it to their option. No, the Lord well knew that by nature we never should be disposed to comply with any such proposition, it being so averse to our nature, to renounce all hopes and expectation of life and salvation by any thing in ourselves, and to be willing to be saved entirely by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Proud man will ever disdain all these proposals; therefore the Spirit which here invites the thirsty soul, the soul that is made willing by grace to come to Christ; that same Spirit must powerfully work and operate upon the hearts and consciences of those invited, as that they shall be constrained to throw down their weapons of hostility against Christ, and become his hearty and willing subjects.

Saying and doing are two things with us, but they are but one with the Almighty. If the Spirit says, Come; it is done. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light," Gen. i. 3. That is, he spake light: so the Spirit says, Come; and they are impowered to come, it is an effectual word. "He gives them power to believe; power to become the sons of God," John i. 12. May he so work at this time, while I am speaking to your outward ears; may he work powerfully upon the hearts of all those

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who

who shall or may at this time be made to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation ; may he call you as he did Lazarus, out of the grave of sin and corruption, in which you have lain all your life unto the present moment in a state of nature, with a *Lazarus, come forth*, John xi. 43. Then you with him will come forth with your grave-clothes and napkin ; and may God by his Spirit loose you and let you go : though you are tied and bound with the chains of your sins, yet if Christ loose you from your fetters, then you will come with the greatest delight and pleasure to this water of life ; and if your souls begin to long for this water, I say, Come and welcome, come and welcome to it : you are as welcome to it as a covenant God can make you : So the bride, the Lamb's wife, Rev. xxi. 9, " says, Come." The church is desirous of inviting all to the Lord Jesus Christ, as she believes do see their need of him. She recommends her husband, Isa. liv. 5. to all that are enquiring after him ; she tells seeking souls, " that he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and that he is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 10, 16. She endeavours to display some of his glorious excellencies ; she extols him as her prophet to teach her ; as her priest to atone for her ; and as her king to rule and reign in and over her. Gospel-ministers are ever labouring night and day, studying to set forth the excellency of Christ " to poor weary and heavy-laden sinners," Matt. xi. 28. to attract the hearts and affections of poor sinners towards him. They use all the persuasive arguments that become gospel-ministers to use, 2 Cor. v. 11. They tell the people, " Whosoever comes to Christ, he will by no means cast out ;" and if they reply, they have no power of their own, as every Christian will be more or less sensible of ; they will direct them

them where their strength is, and shew them that Christ is a Saviour "to the very *uttermost* of all" that come unto God through him, and that he "ever lives to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. They tell them, that Christ will save to the very *utmost* of all their sin and rebellion: should their sin and rebellion swell to the utmost pitch it can arise; should it be aggravated to the very utmost, with every circumstance which appears to make it black and dismal against them, and should their conscience condemn them to the utmost, yet the uttermost of Christ's grace exceeds the uttermost of our sin. Deep cries unto deep. The deep of God's grace in Christ exceeds the deep of our sin and corruption; for "where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound," Rom. v. 20. "But shall we continue in sin that grace may abound," God forbid, says the apostle. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" chap. vi. 1, 2. This is not a means of cherishing sin in the believer, or opening a door to licentiousness; but the contrary, there is no better way of conquering the power of inbred sin, than a discovery of the pardoning love and mercy of Christ to a poor sinner, to the very *utmost* of all his sin and corruption. Thus the bride, the church of Christ, and all true gospel-ministers that labour in Christ's vineyard, their language is, "Come, come, and take of this water of life freely," If you are made willing to come to Christ; if you thirst after Christ and the water of life mentioned in the text; and if the Spirit of God is at work upon your souls drawing you to himself; I say, you have no cause to doubt of your acceptance by him. "Though your sins may be as scarlet, they shall be as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,"

“ wool,” Isa. i. 18. “ Come, come, and take of this
“ water of life freely.”

“ So let him that heareth say, Come,” him that heareth the word so as to understand it. Those know so much of the word as to understand there is provision made in the gospel for poor thirsty souls; though they may not experience so much of these things themselves, yet they cannot but recommend what they know to others. Those say, Come.—Come and taste of the riches of his grace. Come and taste of pardoning-love with me; O how sweet it is to my soul! I have been enabled under the word, as a poor unworthy hearer of it, to sit under a Redeemer’s shadow with great delight, and have experienced his fruit to be sweet to my taste, Cant. ii. 3. I have here drank of this water of life, and it has been life to my soul: wherefore then should you starve in a land of plenty, where the gospel of Christ is so freely preached by his ministring servants? Thus those who hear the word are for having others to partake of the blessings of it with themselves. “ Him that heareth saith, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

Now this invitation is a *free one*; nothing freer than a *gift*. This water of life is freely given; let him take of it *freely*; it comes *freely* to us, “ without money and without price.” Christ is said to *give* eternal life to his people, John x. 28. and xvii. 2. He is said to *give* eternal life to as many as are given him by the Father, to no more nor to no less. As many as are given in covenant to Christ, this water of life is given unto; it flows freely into their souls, that neither men or devils can stop the current of it; let him thus take of this water of life freely: Let him take it; hinder him not by any obstacles that may be thrown in the way by such who know not the gospel, such who preach with the shell upon their head,

head, young school-boys, that make the heart of the righteous sad, whom God hath not made sad, Ezek. xiii. 22. that wound the dear children of God by doing all in their power to shut up rather than open this glorious fountain, or well-spring of life ministerially to the people. Shall Christ give this water of life freely to his poor thirsting people? and shall he send forth his ministers to proclaim the same? and shall any presume to stop the current of this river? Awful will it be for those who do this another day! They will wish they had studied any other art or science rather than to meddle with God's word. Let such read Ezek. xxxiv. throughout and tremble. Alas, how are the waters of the sanctuary fouled with the feet of the priests at this time! It seems but a small matter to them to eat up the good pasture, but they must tread down with their feet the residue of the pastures, and to have drunk of the deep waters, but they must foul the residue thereof with their feet: and Christ's poor flock must drink it after they have done? But a time will come when God will feed the fat ones with judgment. So he will judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. There is a necessity to speak in this manner, when men attempt to muddy this precious river of water of life, which we have been speaking about, by their corrupt and false doctrine, and when the doctrines of grace are so much despised, yea exploded by many.

The riches of the free, distinguishing, sovereign grace and mercy of God in Christ, without any works of righteousness which we can do to be added to it, open a door of mercy to, and a way of access for every poor, thirsty, fainting, sinful, polluted soul to come unto. Thus you see the freeness of the invitation to this water of life; none are to be excluded from it that see their need of it; neither will any thing be required of them for this water.

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Whatever God requires of his people he will give it them, it is all of his free grace: Let him take of the water of life freely.

Having now considered the things I proposed, I proceed,

Fourthly and lastly, to make some improvement of the whole. In doing which I shall address myself to four sorts of people.

1. Those who have drank freely of this water.
2. Those whose souls now begin to thirst after it.
3. To such who think they have a power and will in themselves to turn to God, and partake of this water of life at their own option.

Lastly, To such who are altogether unconcerned about the matter.

1. I am to address myself to such that have drank freely of this water of life. You know something of the virtue of it—you know it to be living water—you have found its life-giving virtues—so that your souls are continually quickened and animated by it—it is a well-spring in your souls—it springeth up into everlasting life: You cannot cease to be fruitful when thus watered. So your souls are purified and made better by this water. And, O my brethren, you will, ere long, swim in the boundless ocean of God's everlasting love! The water of life you now receive comes from this ocean; but then you will come to the ocean itself: your tongue (as I observed before) will no more fail for thirst; neither will you know then, as you do now, what it is to be barren in your soul; these complaints will cease for ever: Mean time, methinks you are refreshed when you hear any thing about this water of life. O that you may have a large draught of this water, while I am now preaching to you! How will your souls exult in the Lord your God, especially while you are in such a wilderness as this world is to your souls! O that
God

God would smite the rock at this time, that the waters might gush out, and that the streams might flow in abundance into your souls! Psalm lxxviii. 20. then you will not think this a lost opportunity: It is your duty and privilege to wait at the pool of ordinances: And may you experience yourself healed, at this time by this water, of whatever disease or malady you may have been troubled with, then you will be able to speak more of its virtue and excellency, and you will desire to drink yet larger draughts of it; for the more you receive, the more you will want of this water.

2. I shall address myself to such whose souls now begin to thirst after this water of life. "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness," Matt. v. 6. How came you to thirst after this water of life if you saw no excellency in it? Who created that holy thirst in your souls after righteousness? Certainly Christ, and he only can satisfy the same: "For I have satiated the weary soul, and "I have replenished every sorrowful soul," Jer. xxxi. 25. The vast desires of your soul are such, as that they cannot be satisfied with any thing short of this water of life; you are like the two daughters of the horse-leach, that cry, "Give, give." Prov. xxx. 15. You never can be satisfied, or have enough of it, whilst you sojourn here below, you have an incessant thirst after it. O may God by his Spirit bring you to this water to-night, that you might have a draught, and that your thirst might be so satisfied to-night, as that you may go home and recommend this water to other poor thirsty souls! "Let him that is athirst come." O may the Lord take you by the hand, and lead you to this fountain—may he dispel clouds of darkness—may the Lord scatter all your fears to night! you may take it freely: Neither men or devils can hinder you

you of it. Satan may tell you this water is not for you tho' you are thirsting after it; but he is a liar, and the father of lies; believe him not; for if you really are convinced, by the Spirit of God, of your need of this water, and if you are thirsting after it, if Christ's word is to be taken, you are heartily welcome. You may take this water of life freely, without asking the devil leave. May you be enabled to come to this water of life without any disputing with satan or with your own wicked heart: and cast yourself upon Christ as a poor, needy, thirsty, fainting soul! And I make no doubt of your being accepted by him, "for he that cometh to Christ, he will by no means cast out."

3. I shall address myself to such who think they have a power in themselves to make themselves willing to come and take of this water of life. Your case is like that of the young man in the gospel, who came to our Lord with a "Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life," Matt. xix. 16. He wanted eternal life, the water of life—he was very desirous after it—he thought it was a thing worth seeking after—therefore he comes to Christ to enquire about it. Our Lord observing something very agreeable in this young man, it is said, Mark x. 21. Jesus beholding him loved him. And yet notwithstanding this he was rotten at the bottom: He was under the law as a covenant of works, and consequently under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. And our Lord speaks to him upon his own principles: "Thou knowest the commandments." And if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; plainly shewing, if he appealed to Cæsar, to Cæsar he must go: He must keep the law in thought, word, and deed, and then, and not otherwise, he should be saved by it. But, alas! when our Lord begins

begins to sift this young man, after all his pretended piety to the law, and keeping it, as he vainly imagined he had done from his youth up. Alas! poor man, he little understood the spirituality of God's law, nor the plague of his own heart. After all, when there was but one thing lacking, in order, as our Lord expresses it, to his being perfect, which was to sell what he had and distribute it to the poor, it then appears his heart and affections were in the world, he leaves our Lord and goes away sorrowing; and we never read of his coming to our Lord any more: He had enough of Christ's religion; he wants no more of it: worldly riches are preferred before Christ. Thousands of such professors we have in this our day. And yet this young man must needs be religious: nothing short of eternal life is the thing he seeks after. But alas, how does he seek it? Why as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 32.

Now if this be your case, you are at as great a distance from the Lord Jesus Christ as those poor unhappy creatures that are now making the disturbance at the door †, and are endeavouring to persecute the children of God, and disturb them from their attendance on his worship in his house. These are enemies of Christ; so are you: you are no nearer to this water of life than they; perhaps not so near: "Publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before you Pharisees," Matt. xxi. 31. While you think you have a power and will in you to turn to God at your pleasure, it will be an effectual bar to your coming to the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore I may say to such, you have neither part or lot in the matter, for your heart is not right with God. "You are in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity,"

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Acts

† Alluding to the disturbances and outrages at Hampstead.

Acts viii. 21—23. who think that you can by any power or will of your own turn to God; for Christ has told his people, “without me ye can do nothing,” John xv. 5. Neither are we sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, “but our sufficiency is of God,” 2 Cor. iii. 5. It is God must conquer your will, as I have already observed, by his grace; and bring it to submit to his, before you will be willing to come to Christ for life. Think no more of coming to Christ in your own strength, nor obtaining this water of life by any thing you can do either in whole or in part. But may you be enabled to come as a poor lost undone sinner, to the fountain of his free-grace in Christ; and take of this water of life freely.

Lastly, I shall address myself to such who are altogether unconcerned about the matter. O sirs! there is such a thing as a man’s partaking of the water of life, whatever you may think of the matter; it is a truth known and experienced by all the dear children of God, in all ages of the world: and though you in your hearts are now despising this water of life I have been preaching to you about; yet give me leave to tell you, that living and dying in this state you must perish for ever: and then you will know the lack of a drop of water to cool your parched tongues when cast into that sulphurous lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. xix. 20. into the pit of Tophet, which is ordained, of old; for this purpose the Lord “hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,” Isa. xxx. 33. Yea the Lord is said to “rain upon the wicked, snares, fire and brimstone, an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup,” Psalm xi. 6. Alas! the
devils

devils and damned spirits that are now in hell know these things to their eternal sorrow; they know they never shall be delivered from this place of torment, the smoke of which ascendeth up before God for ever; and they have no rest day nor night. And they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb, which you are now despising, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. O sinners, it will be too late then to cry for the water of life! Dives only petitions for one drop of water to cool his tongue, but is denied, Luke xvi. 24, &c. Though a rich man, he is to have no favour or mercy shewn him here. Lazarus the beggar is not to come from Abraham's bosom to wait upon a rich man in hell, no not to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, no nor to go to his brethren to warn them to flee from the wrath to come. No favours are to be shewn in hell, though ever so small, to the vessels of wrath, which are fitted for destruction, and have filled up the measure of their iniquities, these suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude, ver. 7.

And you, sirs, that are going on in open rebellion against Christ and his government; if mighty grace prevent you not in your career, know that "your damnation, slumbereth not," 2 Pet. ii. 3. It will come faster than you can call for it, by all your horrid oaths and imprecations. It will come suddenly upon you, when you will say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon you, as travail upon a woman, and you shall not escape, 1 Theff. v. 3. In vain will you cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on you, and hide you from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 16. Where death leaves you, judgment will find you. And who amongst you,

you, in this place, can dwell with devouring fire? Who amongst you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa. xxxiii. 14. O may you lay these things to heart. Consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Psalm l. 22. May the Lord awaken you by his Spirit to a sense of your misery, and create a holy thirst in the souls of such that never thought seriously of these things before; may you now begin to enquire after this water of life I have now been preaching of to you; that this sermon may never rise in judgment against any of you another day. And may you that have drank freely of this water of life, and such who are thirsting after it, be brought by the Spirit of God to come and take more and more of it, it being free for all who see their need of it. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

May the Lord command his blessing. Amen.

5 AP 58

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